

RICHLAND COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



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EXHIBIT 24
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Long Range Planning Committee
Chairman McNutt
Senators and Representatives

Thank you for giving us a chance to talk about our project. The Conservation District became aware of the lack of proper design and the over use of inappropriate concrete for Bank Stabilization in Richland County in fall of 2009. The concrete rubble that has been dumped along the banks to protect cropland is turning our stretch of the Yellowstone River into a very unsightly area of the river that does not function very well for bank stabilization purposes and is jeopardizing fish habitat and creating hazards for river users. Appropriate sized concrete is acceptable by DEQ for bank stabilization in Eastern Montana due to the lack of availability of hard rock, but it needs to be properly placed on a sloped bank, keyed into the bank and rebar removed.

The conservation district has several concerns about this practice of dumping concrete over the bank in hopes of stopping sloughing of the banks of the River.

1. Lack of proper permits could ultimately be very expensive for landowners to clean up rubble or pay fines for violations from permitting agencies. (we do not want this to happen, we would like to be able to show land owners the proper way to use concrete, using placement of correctly sized concrete on properly sloped banks and revegetation of the area to help stabilize the land)
2. Dumping of concrete over the banks of the river in hopes of stopping the erosion is destined to FAIL, the river works in behind the concrete (most of the pieces are sidewalk slabs that don't meet DEQ's requirements in size and shape for appropriate use for stabilization). The river either carries the slabs down the river or works in behind the dumped concrete eroding the bank and pulling all of the dumped concrete with rebar attached into the river, this becomes a hazard for boaters and fisherman.
3. We also seem to have a case of one landowner dumping concrete to stabilize his property, so the next landowner does the same and it continues on down the river.
4. This area has been identified as very important to Pallid Sturgeon Habitat. The Pallid Sturgeon is listed as an endangered species.

The public benefits to this project include the physical and biological health of the Lower Yellowstone River. Protecting the habitat of the Pallid Sturgeon (a designated endangered species) is one of the benefits of our project. Along with developing a site specific engineered bank stabilization project to demonstrate materials, methods and costs associated with implementations of this type of project will help minimize failed projects, prevent the introduction of hazardous material into the river and reduce the hazards to river users. This particular area of the river is close to one of the few boat ramps in the area for recreationist to access the river. It is a very popular area for fishing. Boaters and floaters use the river from Intake to the Confluence to enjoy the beauty of Big Sky County. Chunks of concrete with rebar in the river bed from a failed stabilization project have the potential for destroying property and


injuring citizens. Added benefits would include protecting valuable cropland and installing a riparian buffer strip to capture runoff of fertilizer and pesticides and provide habitat for birds and wildlife.

We feel this project is important for several reasons. Every year we have at least one 310 permit application to install rip rap on the Yellowstone River. As conservation district supervisors we know how important it is to land owners to save their cropland or possibly an irrigation structure such as a pivot. We also realize very few if any of these projects are successful. Part of the reason for their failure is the lack of design for long term stabilization. There are multiple sites along the Yellowstone River that need attention and this project would give land owners a first-hand look on what a well designed stabilization project using concrete as the rip rap material would look like on the ground. They would also be able to weigh the economic costs of a project of this size against the value of land lost to erosion.

We have the support of the land owner, Mary Moore, the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project, the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council, MT Fish Wildlife and Parks, and the Army Corp of Engineers and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Thank you for the time to explain our project, we would like to be able to visit with you in person but the cost of traveling to Helena puts a strain on our budget. We have asked Warren Kellogg to speak for us. He is familiar with our project and can answer any of your questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Duane Ullman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Duane" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Ullman".

Duane Ullman, Chairman
Richland County Conservation District